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[Review Paper]

The Genealogy of English and Scottish Literary Balladry from the Early Eighteenth Century to the Nineteenth Century

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Abstract

Literary balladry has not been acknowledged as a literary genre as traditional balladry has in the history of English and Scottish literature. This is because the types of imitation are so varied and quite often subtle, and it is rather difficult to define a piece of work as a literary ballad. Therefore, literary balladry has not provided researchers and readers with an adequate amount of texts. As a result, the study of the literary ballad has not fully matured.

However, the nineteenth century saw the blossoming of literary balladry when more than 60 poets created over 400 literary ballads. The purpose of this review paper is to provide a rough sketch of the genealogy of English and Scottish literary balladry from the early eighteenth century to the nineteenth century. The paper begins with an introduction of three representative ballad scholars in the twentieth century. As the predecessor of the nineteenth century literary balladists, Lady Elizabeth Wardlaw's deviation from simple imitation is discussed. In the Romantic era, the sentimentalized tendency of Wordsworth and Keats is stated. Among the Victorian balladists, refrain technicians are outstanding. Tennyson and Rossetti succeeded in expressing the complicated psychology of the narrator with varying some refrains of traditional ballads. But excessive devotion to the ballad technique produced the cultural phenomenon of parody. Trail's parody ballad shows a critical spirit against blind following of the contemporary popularity of ballad refrain.

KEY WORDS : literary ballad, parody ballad, refrain, traditional ballad

1. Twentieth Century Literary Ballad Studies

Ballad poetry is roughly classified into two types: traditional balladry and literary balladry. Traditional balladry is basically narrative poetry that anonymous people have created, sung, and passed down to the following generations since about the twelfth or the thirteenth century. Literary balladry is also basically narrative poetry that has been produced by sophisticated poets with their imitations of the stories, techniques, and styles of traditional balladry. However, it is quite difficult to define a piece of work as a literary ballad, because the types of imitation are so varied and quite often subtle. This is the reason why literary balladry has not been acknowledged as a literary genre as traditional balladry has in the history of English and Scottish literature. Literary balladry has not provided researchers with an adequate amount of texts as the base of their ballad study; consequently, the study of the literary ballad has not fully matured.

It was *The Ballad Revival: Studies in the Influence of Popular on Sophisticated Poetry* by A. B. Friedman in 1961 that positively suggested the existence of the genealogy of literary balladry in British literary history. Friedman begins the discussion with his own understanding of balladry as the 'otherness' from poetry.[1] 'The ballad is not a species of our staple sort of poetry. It belongs to an

altogether different class [. . .]. Beneath sophisticated poetry lies another poetic system, which, under earlier conditions, preserved a primitive mode of composition radically different from that of sophisticated poetry.'[2] Once the otherness is noticed, it cannot be foregone to find a common ground between popular and learned poetry. His pioneering literary ballad study aims to reveal that 'balladry has affected literary criticism and theory at crucial moments and has vitally influenced the style of several major poets — and through them the whole development of English poetry.'[3] Thus Friedman roughly but clearly describes how the elements and ethos of traditional and broadside balladry have been transmitted from the early eighteenth to the early twentieth century.

The succeeding critic of literary balladry, Malcolm Laws Jr., accomplished two achievements in *The British Literary Ballad: A Study in Poetic Imitation*. He tried to define what literary balladry is by saying that literary balladry is 'the product and possession not of the common people of village or city but of sophisticated poets writing for literate audiences. They are printed poems rather than songs, and they have no traditional life. Despite great variations among individual examples, the literary ballads as a class are conscious and deliberate imitations of folk and broadside ballads.'[4] On the basis of his own classification, Laws develops a further definition of literary ballad, but in the first chapter he begins the discussion ambiguously. 'In the field of balladry, definition by example has often been found more enlightening than abstract verbalizing. Thus one may begin by identifying as literary ballads such frequently anthologized poems as the following: Wordsworth's "Lucy Gray," Scott's "The Eve of St. John," Southey's "The Battle of Blenheim," Tennyson's "The Charge of the Light Brigade," Rossetti's "Sister Helen," Housman's "Is My Team Ploughing?" Hardy's "Ah, Are You Digging on My Grave?" and Yeats's "The Ballad of Father Gilligan."[5] Consequently Laws sets the only two main imitation markers of styles and subjects. The imitation of styles and subjects is a part of 'great variations among individual examples'. Although after the main discussion on these aspects of imitation he expanded his research topics to the contemporary literary balladry and parody ballads, and his topics were quite original in the undeveloped literary ballad study in the 1970's, his study was not enough for a complete understanding of the 'great variations' of imitation.

On the other hand, Laws completed another great achievement for the study of the literary ballad by appending the list of literary ballads to his book, where 537 titles of literary ballads written by 111 poets including those mentioned in his book, from the eighteenth century to the modern period, are listed.[6] As defining literary balladry is not easy, the publication of the list was a landmark achievement for the study of the ballad. Friedman already mentioned as many works and poets as Laws, the area and boundary of literary balladry had not been obvious at a glance until the Laws' list appeared. Owning to Laws, we had the initial list of the genealogy of literary balladry, but it was a pity that all of the texts mentioned in the list were still hard to obtain. Anne Henry Ehrenpreis introduced only 41 full texts with proper headnotes in *The Literary Ballad* in 1966.[7] This was the first authentic literary ballad anthology edited with the clear notion of what literary balladry is, but compared with the Laws' list, the number included in Ehenpreis was too small. About 40 years later *Sixty English Literary Ballads*, edited by M. Yamanaka and 4 coeditors, followed Ehrenpreis to introduce 60 texts with full-length notes.[8] Laws, Ehrenpreis, and *Sixty* have been enlarged to 'the English Literary Ballads Archive', where 748 full texts of literary ballads by 141 poets for 300 years have been accumulated.[9] This might not be the definitive anthology of literary balladry. As Mary Ellen Brown at the end of her paper "Placed, Replaced, or Misplaced?: the Ballads' Progress" anticipates, an anthology with a wider range is still longed for.[10]

On the phase of ballad criticism, Yamanaka, going further than Malcolm Laws, in *The Twilight of the British Literary Ballad in the Eighteenth Century* advocates the five aspects of literary ballad imitation: direct imitation, technical (or formal)

imitation, the imitation of subject matter, stylistic imitation, and the imitation of traditional ethos.[11] These cover almost all the literary ballads which have been brought to the public eye since the early eighteenth century and generated the genealogy of about seven hundred and fifty imitated pieces. The achievement of *The Twilight* is that it succeeds in stating the characteristics of the imitation of the eighteenth century literary balladry, and pointing out the meaning of the imitation: the eighteenth century literary balladry led to high Romanticism.

2. Wardlaw's Imitation and Deviation

The literary balladists in the eighteenth century such as John Gay (1685-1732), Thomas Tickell (1686-1740), David Mallet (1705-65), and William Shenstone (1714-63), who are almost obscure today, left simple imitations of traditional balladry or reminiscently romantic or sentimental pieces. Beyond such simple imitated poetry, "Hardyknute" (1719) by Lady Elizabeth Wardlaw (1677-1727) makes an important mark in the genealogy of English and Scottish literary balladry. It shows the first significant deviation from the impersonal tradition by describing mental anguish of the hero.[12]

The key figure, Hardyknute, is derived from the quasi-mythological combatant, Alexander Stewart (1214-83), the fourth Steward of Scotland, forty-nine years old, at the time of the Battle of Largs in 1263.[13] Mrs. Wardlaw intentionally remodeled the historical figure and his legend by keeping the traditional ethos of suspense and irony. Hardyknute, the old warrior of seventy, having achieved distinction and fame in the past battles, is spending a quiet life. His full-blown dignity is introduced at the opening stanza: 'Stately stept he east the wa', / And stately stept he west, / Full seventy years he now had seen, / Wi' scarce seven years of rest.' (1-4)[14] His peerless and fair old dame, his four stout sons surviving through fierce battles, and his only fair daughter are those whom he is proud of and content with. But some queer and inexplicable episodes are inserted in the story, which casts a cloud on the dignified description of Hardyknute at the opening stanza and his brilliant career as a renowned warrior. Describing his daughter's beauty with such expressions as 'Her girdle shaw'd her middle gimp,/ And gowden glist her fair'(27-28), the narrator suddenly adds 'what waefu' wae her beauty bred!'(29). At this moment we cannot anticipate what this small cry means, but at the end of the story we can presume what caused the inconceivable closing. One day Hardyknute was called back to the battlefield against the king of North. On his way to the battlefield, we come across the mysterious episode again. When he met a wounded knight, he ardently invited him to his castle to make his wife and daughter take care of him, but the knight consistently rejected Hardyknute's chivalric hospitality saying 'Kind chieftain, your intent pursue, / For here I maun abyde'(135-36). Here again we don't know what the episode leads to. In the scene of the battlefield, Hardyknute's fighting spirit is described quite as fierce as when he was younger. When the king of North challenged him by saying 'Where is Harkyknute sae fam'd, / And fear'd at Britain's throne' (227-28), he proudly accepted the challenge saying 'I'm Hardyknute; this day, / To Scotland's king I heght / To lay thee low, as horses hoof'(235-37). He got victory through the fierce battle and a monumental cross was set up in order to praise him. His fully satisfied life as a warrior might have been completed here.

But Mrs. Wardlaw's intention was not to recreate the historical legend of Alexander Stewart, nor to celebrate ancient Scotland's victory. When Hardyknute returned home, what he found there was his deserted tower. His graceful wife and his beautiful daughter who should have kept his fort were gone. His sons and his men who had followed Hardyknute back from the battle, having a feeling of foreboding at the sight, left him quickly.

His tow'r that us'd wi' torches blaze
To shine sae far at night,
Seem'd now as black as mourning weed,
Nae marvel sair he sigh'd.

'There's nae light in my lady's bower,
There's nae light in my ha';

Nae blink shines round my Fairly fair,
Nor ward stands on my wa'.
'What bodes it? Robert, Thomas, say;'—
Nae answer fitts their dread.
'Stand back, my sons, I'le be your guide;'
But by they past with speed.

'As fast I've sped owre Scotland's faes,' —
There ceas'd his brag of weir,
Sair sham'd to mind ought but his dame,
And maiden Fairly fair.
Black fear he felt, but what to fear
He wist nae yet; wi' dread
Sair shook his body, sair his limbs,
And a' the warrior fled. (317-36)

While Mrs. Wardlaw skillfully keeps the traditional form by observing the ballad stanza of iambic tetrametre on odd lines and trimetre on even lines, rhyming *abcb*, and sometimes sounding rough alliteration, she makes the narrative open-ended. She does not explain the reasons why the tower was deserted and why the lady and the daughter were gone, but simply describes in the ironical and suspenseful ending Hardyknute as an old man who was confused about and frightened at what he saw at the last stage of his life. The small mysterious episodes mentioned above might foreshadow this unexpected ending. Does she insist on the meaninglessness of the fame in the battlefield or the stupidity that men are not aware of it? The poet's artistic intention might be to reveal her skepticism to the conventional heroism. In this way she succeeds in leaving the audience in such suspense and irony as they experience in the representatively anthologized traditional ballads of "Lord Randal" (Child 12A) and "Sir Patrick Spens" (Child 58A)[15], and at the same time, creating not a simple imitation of a narrative poem but a sophisticated literary ballad.

One of the key factors of literary balladry is that the poet's intention is implied in the work. Traditional balladry does not have specified authors. The ballads had been produced and handed down anonymously for centuries. Basically they tell actions and events but never a character's personal sentiment nor feeling. When the characters in a story are given their names, it never means the story is concerned about their own private lives. Their individuality has been dissolved through the process of being handed to for the generations. Namely the world of traditional balladry is impersonal.[16] On the contrary, literary balladry is never impersonal. Poets imitate traditional ballads to create them with their own intentions or purposes. "Hardyknute," reflecting the old man's deep embarrassment or repentance, is the first significant deviation from the impersonal tradition in the early stage of the genealogy of English and Scottish literary balladry.

To experience the suspense and irony of traditional balladry, it is worthwhile for us to read the two traditional pieces here. "Lord Randal" produces a feeing of suspense through the technique of constructing the story by dialogues between main characters. The suspicion that Lord Randal might have been poisoned by his lover in the woods is gradually disclosed through their dialogues.

'O where ha you been, Lord Randal, my son?
And where ha you been, my handsome young man?'
'I ha been at the greenwood; mother, mak my bed soon,
For I'm wearied wi hunting, and fain wad lie down.'

'An wha met ye there, Lord Randal, my son?
An wha met you there, my handsome young man?'
'O I met wi my true-love; mother, mak my bed soon,
For I'm wearied wi huntin, an fain wad lie down.'(1-8)

Lord Randal's mother repeats the same question twice in a stanza, and he answers it in the third line, adding a repetitive line at the end of each stanza. The narrative style of repeating the same phrases makes

the story develop very slowly, but paradoxically increases a feeling of tension and suspense. Their dialogues gradually raise tension and suspense to the sixth stanza, where the mother and the son share the suspicion of the murder: she cries 'O I fear you are poisoned, Lord Randal, my son!'(21), then he admits 'O yes, I am poisoned; mak my bed soon'(23). But from the seventh stanza the next plot of Lord Randal's nuncupative will starts slowly again. In the end, Lord Randal's condensed woe is expressed in the form of a will: 'I leave her hell and fire'(40). The ballad technique of framing a whole story with slowly developing dialogues provides the audience with fully intensified tension and suspense.

"Sir Patrick Spens" is a ballad of a shipwreck of Scottish nobles. Sir Patrick Spence, a skilled captain, was ordered by a Scottish king to embark for the sea in winter. The king who "sits in Dumferling toun, drinking the blude-reid wine"(1-2) and "has written a braid letter, / And signed it wi' his hand, / And sent it to Sir Patrick Spence"(9-11) is said to be Alexander III (1241-86).[17] But one of the sailors objected to the embarking because he witnessed "the new moon, / Wi' the auld moon in her arm"(25-26) foretelling the coming storm. Predictably enough Sir Patrick Spence was shipwrecked together with the Scottish nobles.

O our Scots nobles were richt laith
To weet their cork-heeled shoon;
But lang owre a' the play were played,
Their hats they swam aboon.

O lang, lang may their ladies sit,
Wi' their fans into their hand,
Or eir they see Sir Patrick Spence
Cum sailing to the land.
. . . . . .
Haf owre, haf owre to Aberdour,
It's fiftie fathom deep,
And thair lies guid Sir Patrick Spence,
Wi' the Scots lords at his feet.
(29-36, 41-44)

Noble ladies dressed up with "their fans" (34) and "their gold kems"(38) and waiting for their lords are ironically described. The ending scene is full of irony. Sir Patrick Spence, who followed the king's unreasonable order, is lying at the bottom of the sea, just like a king having "Scottish lords at his feet"(44). Mrs. Wardlaw is deft at recreating such lines as 'he [the good Scots king] sat at dine, / With noble chiefs in brave aray, / Drinking the blood-red wine'(38-40)', or 'Late, late yestreen'(73) in "Hardyknute". These are found in "Sir Patrick Spens".

3. Romantic Literary Balladists

The literary ballad genealogy fully launched under the influence of *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry* (1765) by Thomas Percy (1729-1811). *Reliques* prepared the ground for the Romantic poets, produced the ballad revival movement in which many professional poets created imitations of traditional ballads, and urged the vogue for editing ballad collections. Prominent literary figures such as William Blake (1757-1827), William Wordsworth (1770-1850), S. T. Coleridge (1772-1834), M. G. Lewis (1775-1818), Percy Bysshe Shelley (1792-1822), John Keats (1795-1821), and Thomas Hood (1799-1845) created many literary ballads.

Wordsworth, one of the Romantics, was highly influenced by Percy's *Reliques*. It was in the early nineteenth century when he proudly announced the direct influence from *Reliques* on the Romantic poets by saying he did not think that there was an able writer in verse of the day who would not be proud to acknowledge his obligation to the *Reliques*.[18] *Lyrical Ballads* (1798), cooperatively published with Coleridge, is one of Wordsworth's products of the influence by the *Reliques* and the ballad revival movement. What attracted Wordsworth to balladry, who had been feeling bored with sophisticated subject matters and poetic diction, was simple matters and language. In the second 'Preface' of *Lyrical Ballads* in 1802 he insisted on describing common life and using common people's language as the purpose of the publication of *Lyrical Ballads*.[19] However, his final destination was not to create

genuine narratives of simple matters and language like traditional balladry. In another part of the 'Preface' of 1802, he declares 'it will be the wish of the Poet to bring his feelings near to those of the persons whose feelings he describes.'[20] What really matters for him as a poet might be to be thoroughly integrated with the characters in his narrative poems. For Wordsworth, describing common people might be equal to describing his desire to be close to them, namely, describing his own feeling in the same situation as common people's simple life.[21]

"The Thorn" reflects Wordsworth's contradiction between his announcement in the "Preface" and his work. Under the declaration of preferring simplicity, Wordsworth wrote one of his representative literary ballads, "The Thorn". Martha Ray was betrayed by her lover, Stephen Hill, on the appointed wedding day, and he went to a church with another maid. After six months, Martha, being pregnant and mad, started going to the mountaintop. No one knows if a baby was born, nor if it was born alive or dead. A narrator went up to the mountain, and there he witnessed Martha mourning repeatedly. Below is the climax scene of the poem.

> I did not speak — I saw her face,
> Her face it was enough for me;
> I turned about and heard her cry,
> "O misery! O misery!"
> And there she sits, until the moon
> Through half the clear blue sky will go,
> And when the little breezes make
> The waters of the pond to shake,
> As all the country know,
> She shudders and you hear her cry,
> "Oh misery! oh misery! (199-209)[22]

It does not use ballad stanza nor ballad metre, but imitates the subject matter of "The Cruel Mother" (Child 20B), a tragedy of a woman who bore a child under the thorn, and murdered it by herself. It is true that Wordsworth is describing a common tragedy by using common language. But what the poem strongly impresses on the readers is not that Wordsworth imitates a common tragedy of the ballad world by using simple language, but that he simply uses the ballad-like repetitions of "O misery! O misery" (202) and "Oh misery! oh misery!"(209) which seems only to intensify sentimentalism of the narrator and Wordsworth himself. We suspect that for Wordsworth balladry does not mean an objective narrative story. His ballads are poems which reflect his own sentiment and sympathy for common life and language. As one of the Romantic ballad poets, he participated in the sentimentalized tendency of the literary balladry in the Romantic period.

Keats is another literally balladist in the Romantic period, whose "La Belle Dame sans Merci" (1819) borrows the subject matter from "Thomas Rhymer" (Child 37A). A legendary figure of the thirteenth century in Scotland, Thomas of Erceldoune (1210?-97?) was taken by the queen of the fairyland into her world, spent seven years, and came back endowed with the prophetic instinct. "Thomas Rhymer", whose folklore is mixed with Christian episodes, tells the legendary encounter of Thomas and the queen. Thomas hailed her as the 'mighty Queen of Heaven'(11). They went through knee-deep red blood 'for forty days and forty nights' (25), and they had a rest in 'a garden green'(30), where the queen prohibited him from plucking the fruit because 'a' the plagues that are in hell / Light on the fruit of this countrie'(35-36). She fed him 'a loaf' of bread and 'a bottle of claret wine'(37-38) there, and tells him the Matthean creed that the narrow road is 'the path of righteousness'(47) and that the broad road is 'the path of wickedness'(51). But "Thomas Rhymer" is a genuine narrative consisting of characters' acts and events, and there is no explanation of his sentiment nor reflection. On the other hand, Keats' knight says that he was enchanted by 'a faery's child'(14),[23] was taken to her elfin grot where they fell asleep, and dreamt a horrible dream that death-pale kings, princes, and warriors 'cry'd – "La belle Dame sans merci / Hath thee in thrall"'(39-40). What Keats is describing in the poem is the knight's romantic situation of being enthralled by a lady of another world, and his suspended emotion of being half-ecstatic and half-

agonized caused by the enthrallment. When he wakes up on the cold hillside, he starts anguishing and loitering for the lady. The poem begins with a question of the third party.

Ah, what can ail thee, wretched wight,
Alone and palely loitering;
The sedge is wither'd from the lake,
And no birds sing. (1-4)

I see a lilly on thy brow,
With anguish moist and fever dew;
And on thy cheek a fading rose
Fast withereth too. (9-12)

Keats skillfully imitates the ballad-like dialogue and observes the ballad stanza. When an interlocutor asks the knight the reason why he is alone and palely loitering, the knight begins to confess he is being enthralled (13). The attractiveness of the lady he met is described not so in detail as that of Cynthia in "Endymion"(1818), but quite simply as 'full beautiful'(14) or having long hair, light foot, and wild eyes (15-16) just like the lady in "Thomas Rhymer". On the one hand, Keats tries to maintain the frame of a genuine narrative to describe the episode; on the other he focuses attention on the enchanted knight's sentiment and agony. Narrative objectivity betrays thematic subjectivity. Moreover, Keats implies that the knight's loitering for the lady may last endlessly, because the last stanza repeats the first stanza to make the circulation of his loitering.

And this is why I sojourn here
Alone and palely loitering,
Though the sedge is wither'd from the lake,
And no birds sing. (45-48)

His anguish for her never ends. His suspended emotion of being half-ecstatic and half-agonized caused by her enthrallment never ends. Keats brings Romantic agony and stasis into the literary balladry of the Romantic period.[24]

4. Refrain Technicians in the Victorian Era

In Scotland under the same influence of *Reliques*, Robert Burns (1759-96), Joanna Baillie (1762-1851), James Hogg (1770-1835), Sir Walter Scott (1771-1832), and John Leyden (1775-1811), who were socialized as members of Scott's literary circle, were enthusiastic about creating literary ballads. After *Reliques*, not only creating imitation pieces but also editing collections contributed to the development of the literary ballad genealogy. Scott published *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border* (1802-03), which gave the same tremendous influence as *Reliques* upon the nineteenth century British and Scottish poets such as William Motherwell (1797-1835), Alfred Tennyson (1809-92), Charles Kingsley (1819-75), D. G. Rossetti (1828-82), Lewis Carroll (1832-98), A. C. Swinburne (1837-1909), as well as John Davidson (1857-1909). Actually the genealogy of the nineteenth century literary balladry opened with *Minstrelsy* and produced the golden period of the literary ballad. Not only did more than 60 poets, both renowned and unrenowned, create over 400 literary ballads, but they also stepped out of their eighteenth century predecessors' rather simple ways of imitation; they developed their own themes and techniques.

Tennyson, who is said to have memorized the whole three volumes of *Minstrelsy* by Scott,[25] created "The Sisters" (1832). This is not only a direct imitation of the traditional ballad, "The Twa Sisters" (Child 10C), but also a typical example of the nineteenth century literary ballad which describes complicated sentiments or agonies by imitating ballad refrain. The younger sister in an honorable family had a sexual relationship with an earl before her marriage, and was executed by fire after their love affair was exposed. The elder sister was ashamed of her sister's having disgraced her family, and decided to get revenge. One night she had a chance to invite the earl to her chamber. After she won his love, she stabbed him on the bed three times with her sharp dagger. Her vengeance was completed.

We were two daughters of one race:
She was the fairest in the face:
The wind is blowing in turret and tree.
They were together, and she fell;
Therefore revenge became me well.
O the Earl was fair to see!
. . . . . .
I rose up in the silent night:
I made my dagger sharp and bright.
The wind is raving in turret and tree.
As half-asleep his breath he drew,
Three times I stabbed him through and through.
O the Earl was fair to see!

I curled and combed his comely head,
He looked so grand when he was dead.
The wind is blowing in turret and tree.
I wrapt his body in the sheet,
And laid him at his mother's feet.
O the Earl was fair to see!
(1-6 & 25-36; emphasis added)[26]

The two refrains in each stanza produce highly dramatic effects on the murder story. The one is the changing refrain in the third line. Along with development of the story, the verbs of the changing refrains also develop intensively from 'blowing' in the first stanza, to 'howling' in the second, 'roaring' in the third, 'raging' in the fourth, 'raving' in the fifth, and back to 'blowing' in the final. When the elder sister as narrator is recollecting the murder case in the past, the changing refrains represent that her own sensation is being unfolded. Her storm-like sensation is getting worse as things move closer to the climax of the murder and then dying down at the end of the story. Moreover, they suggest that she still keeps that sensation at this moment, because these refrains are told not in the past tense but in the present tense.

However, we should not overlook the fact that the unchanging refrain in each stanza gives dramatic effects on the sequence of the narrator's sensation. Regardless of the fierce emotional shift, she repeats 'O the Earl was fair to see!', which intensifies the fact that she was still madly in love with the earl, who was indeed her sister's lover. Passionately loving him, the elder sister fulfilled her role as an avenger of blood. By imitating the traditional ballad refrain technique but employing the highly skillful deviation of refrain, Tennyson succeeds in representing the elder sister's complicated agony.[27]

Another refrain technician of the nineteenth century is D. G. Rossetti. The story of "Sister Helen"(?1853-80) is that Helen takes her revenge on her lost love by casting a curse: she makes and melts a waxen image of Keith of Ewern, her former lover. Just like in the traditional ballads "Lord Randal" and "Edward", the narrative begins in the form of balladic dialogue with an abrupt opening.

"Why did you melt your waxen man,
Sister Helen?
To-day is the third since you began."
"The time was long, yet the time ran,
Little brother
(O Mother, Mary Mother,
Three days to-day, between Hell and Heaven!)

"But if you have done your work aright,
Sister Helen,
You'll let me play, for you said I might."
"Be very still in your play to-night,
Little brother."
(O Mother, Mary Mother,
Third night, to-night, between Hell and Heaven!)

"You said it must melt ere vesper-bell,
Sister Helen;
If now it be molten, all is well."
"Even so, nay, peace! you cannot tell,
Little brother."
(O Mother, Mary Mother,
O what is this, between Hell and Heaven?)
(1-21)[28]

When Helen's younger brother asks some questions or describes what happens around them, Helen

sometimes neglects his questions and description, but sometimes directly responds to him. She seems to be half absorbed in her inner emotion and to monologize in the form of dialogue. In the opening scene the reason why Helen began to melt the waxen man is not explained, nor whom the waxen man is like. But as the pseudo-dialogue between the two advances, readers learn the whole story behind her curse. Helen and Keith of Ewern made a vow of eternal love with "a ring and a broken coin"(148), but the vow was broken by his marriage to another woman with fair hair. Her revenge began on the day of his marriage. She cursed him by melting his waxen image, and on the morning of his marriage he became ill and lay in bed forlorn. Keith of Ewern and his relatives understand that the cause of his disease is Helen's curse on him. Although they come one after another to beg her to take her curse away from him, to see him before he dies, or to save his soul alive, she completes her revenge. At the end, the wax has dropped from its place. Rossetti, to modify the refrains of the horrible revenge story, effectively uses the ballad-like incremental repetition of the last two lines in each stanza.[29] The words between "O Mother, Mary Mother" and "between Hell and Heaven" sometimes reflect the voice of a third-person narrator or Helen's inner emotion, and sometimes describe her monologues. Rossetti, as well as Tennyson, by imitating the traditional ballad refrain technique, succeeds in representing Helen's intensified agony.

5. Trail's Parody Ballad

As witnessed in the two literary ballads mentioned above, variations of ballad refrain are outstanding in the nineteenth century. Excessive devotion to the ballad technique, however, has produced the cultural phenomenon of parody. Refrain in the era of oral culture originally took the form of audience response to ballad singers or their chorus as one of the co-creators of balladry. In this sense, refrain of traditional balladry reflects the fact that singers and audience shared the same feeling from their singing. It symbolizes the sense of unity in a ballad-singing community. However, along with the development of literate culture, poets have written their work and their co-creators faded away in time. Poets and audience were separated definitely. After the ballad revival, refrain has been one of the techniques poets exhibit in their writings. The nineteenth century literary poets were quite interested in using refrain as mentioned above. But heavy use of refrain was satirized, and sometimes caricatured. Henry Duff Traill (1842-1900), a journalist and satiric poet of *Recaptured Rhymes* (1882) and *Saturday Songs* (1890), parodied the contemporary heavy use of refrain in "After Dilettante Concetti"(1882). He engrafts D. G. Rossetti's "Sister Helen" to "A Superscription" (1869) to parody the popularity of refrain of the century.

"Why do you wear your hair like a man,
Sister Helen?
This week is the third since you began."
"I'm writing a ballad; be still if you can,
Little brother.
(O Mother Carey, mother!
What chickens are these between sea and heaven?)" (1-7)

"The refrain you've studied a meaning had,
Sister Helen!
It gave strange force to a weird ballad.
But refrains have become a ridiculous 'fad'
Little brother.
And Mother Carey, mother,
Has a bearing on nothing in earth or heaven.
(36-42)[30]

Some traditional ballads like "Lord Randal" and "Edward" show the truth of a murder case by the dialogue between mother and son. Rossetti, by imitating that ballad technique, creates the dialogue between Helen and her younger brother in "Sister Helen". It represents the struggle, agony and madness of Helen who takes her revenge on her former lover through a curse of making and melting his waxen image, and at the same time, the

complicated role and psychology of her brother as an interlocutor who always asks some questions or describes what happens around them. Traill completely substitutes the burlesque dialogue between Helen and her brother for the serious dialogue of Rossetti. Helen struggles to make a ballad and her brother makes fun of her. While Rossetti effectively uses the ballad-like incremental repetition of the last two lines in each stanza in order to imply the place where Helen and her brother are set in and to intensify their struggling emotion, Traill again completely substitutes the totally meaningless and burlesque refrain of the last two lines in each stanza for the serious incremental repetition of Rosetti. "*O Mother Cary, mother!*" is a simple and meaningless adaptation of "*O Mother, Mary Mother*" by Rossetti, and the words between "*O Mother Cary, mother!*" and "between sea and heaven" are simple plays on words. These intentional adaptations self-ironize the excessive devotion to the ballad technique of refrain.

The latter part of the parody ballad is an imitation of "A Superscription". Here is the original sonnet composed in 1869:

> Look in my face; my name is Might-have-
> been;
> I am also call'd No-more, Too-late, Farewell;
> Unto thine ear I hold the dead-sea shell
> Cast up thy Life's foam-fretted feet between;
> Unto thine eyes the glass where that is seen
> Which had Life's form and', but by my spell
> Is now a shaken shadow intolerable,
> Of ultimate things unutter'd the frail screen.
>
> Mark me, how still I am! But should there dart
> One moment through thy soul the soft surprise
> Of that wing'd Peace which lulls the breath
> of sighs, —
> Then shalt thou see me smile, and turn apart
> Thy visage to mine ambush at thy heart
> Sleepless with cold commemorative eyes.
> (1-14)[31]

Rossetti expresses a sense of failure and remorse which may be inspired by the death of his wife, Elizabeth Siddal, in 1862, or by a new love for Jane Morris. In the parodied lines below, Trail describes a sense of remorse for using a ballad refrain technique too much, and repeatedly emphasizes that the ballad refrains were out of date by calling them "used-to-was", "played-out", "done-to-death", or "it-will-wash-no-more". The "ballad-burden trick" of refrains are scorned as "foolish empty-jingling burden". The conventional refrain is completely criticized as being tedious.

> Look in my face. My name is Used-to-was;
> I am also called Played-out and Done-to-
> death,
> And It-will-wash-no-more. Awakeneth
> Slowly, but sure awakening it has,
> The common-sense of man; and I, alas!
> The ballad-burden trick, now known too
> well,
> Am turned to scorn, and grown
> contemptible —
> A too transparent artifice to pass.
>
> "What a cheap dodge I am! The cats who dart
> Tin-kettled through the streets in wild
> surprise
> Assail judicious ears not otherwise;
> And yet no critics praise the urchin's 'art,'
> Who to the wretched creature's caudal part
> Its foolish empty-jingling 'burden' ties."
> (50-63)

"After Dilettante Concetti" is full of tough and critical spirit against blind following of the contemporary popularity of imitating ballad refrain, but at the same time the playful imagination in the poem shows the imitation of ballad technique had fully matured in those days. In this sense, parody ballads also suggest the nineteenth century was the golden period of the literary balladry.

So far the genealogy of English and Scottish literary balladry has been roughly sketched from the early eighteenth century to the nineteenth century. The

nineteenth century saw the blossoming of literary balladry. Therefore, the analysis of the works from the following viewpoints surely contributes to the development of literary ballad studies: the characteristics of the nineteenth century balladry, the role they played in the literary ballad genealogy, and the meanings they produced in the history of British poetry. Moreover, by way of the Romantics and the Victorian poets, the influence of the ballad revival was transferred even to the modern poets. It is also interesting and indispensable to view how the key factors of the nineteenth century influenced the early twentieth century balladry.

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[1.] Cf. A. B. Friedman, *The Ballad Revival: Studies in the Influence of Popular on Sophisticated Poetry* (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1961) 5.

[2.] Friedman 6.

[3.] Friedman 10.

[4.] G. Malcolm Laws, Jr., *The British Literary Ballad: A Study in Poetic Imitation* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois UP, 1972) xi.

[5.] Laws 1.

[6.] Cf. Laws 149-61.

[7.] Cf. Anne Henry Ehrenpreis, *The Literary Ballad* (London: Edward Arnold, 1966).

[8.] Cf. M. Yamanaka, H. Nakashima, M. Miyahara, A. Kamata, and D. Taylor, eds., *Sixty English Literary Ballads* (Fukuoka: Kyushu UP, 2002).

[9.] Cf. *The English Literary Ballads Archive*, compiled by M. Ito, N. Miki, M. Miyahara, H. Nakashima, M. Yamanaka, and Y. Yoshida (15 May 2011, <http://literaryballadarchive. com>).

[10.] Mary Ellen Brown, "Placed, Replaced, or Misplaced?: the Ballads' Progress", *Eighteenth Century: Theory and Interpretation* (Texas Tech UP, 2006, *HighBeam Research*, 9 Apr. 2011, <http://www.highbeam.com>) 6. : 'Imagine with me then a new anthology of ballads, with no claims for generic exclusivity, but implying some generative relationship among all the materials, a mega-concept of continuity and change. This anthology would be full of the textual (and sometimes musical) evidence — the poems and songs, their corporality and historicity demanding notice. These texts we have in profusion. The headnotes and introductory materials would strive to provide as much of the contextual information as possible, as well as touch on the rich body of "ideas" and "theories" this material — popular, broadside, literary — has stimulated over time: I think here of Pound and Gummere, of Child and Kittredge, of Macmath and Walker, of Peter and David — the Buchans; but I also think of Coffin and Laws, of Shepherd and Wurzbach, of the Roxburghe and Pepys collections, of Ehrenpreis and Yamanaka, of Coleridge and Wordsworth, Housman and Kipling. The list goes on and must include Scott and Percy. By pulling together materials generatively linked, in multiple media, across time and space, we might display a verse form or tendency — an art — with enormous persistence, sometimes great beauty.'

[11.] Cf. Mitsuyoshi Yamanaka, *The Twilight of the British Literary Ballad in the Eighteenth Century* (Fukuoka: Kyushu UP, 2001) 11-12.

[12.] Friedman mentions the work as one of the neoclassic imitations of traditional ballads in some pages of *The Ballad Revival*. Yamanaka, in *Twilight* 12, categorizes the work as the imitation of a subject matter which 'is the use of the varied subject matter to be found in the ballad tradition, such as historical wars, tragic love, curses, the supernatural world of ghosts and fairies, and metamorphosis.' Besides, the deviation of "Hardyknute" was fully analyzed by him, '"Harkyknute"and Personal Reflection', *Twilight* 17-26: he points out that Mrs. Wardlow 'focuses in the end upon the mental turbulence of the victor in the last stages of his glorious life as a hero who has rescued his country.'

[13.] Cf. Thomas Percy, ed., *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry, Consisting of Old Heroic Ballads, Songs, and Other Pieces of Our Earlier Poets, Together with Some Few of Later Date*, ed., Henry B. Wheatley (New York: Dover Publications, 1966) 2:108.

[14.] The quotations are from Percy, *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry: Consisting of Old Heroic*

Ballads, Songs, and Other Pieces of Our earlier Poets; Together with Some Few of Later Date, vol. 2, with Memoir and Critical Dissertation by the Rev. George Gilfillan (a rpt. entire from Percy's last edition of 1794; Edinburgh: James Nichol, 1858).

[15] All quotations from traditional ballads in this paper are from F. J. Child, ed. *The English and Scottish Popular Ballads*, 5 vols. (1965; New York: Dover, 2003). The numbers and alphabets mentioned after 'Child' mean his categorizing numbers and versions.

[16] Cf. *ESPB* 5:756. Child points out the absence of subjectivity and self-consciousness of traditional balladry due to the fact that it had been produced not by a personal hand but in a community: 'The condition of society in which a truly national or popular poetry appears explains the character of such poetry [popular ballads]. It is a condition in which the people are not divided by political organization and book-culture into markedly distinct classes, in which consequently there is such community of ideas and feelings that the whole people form an individual [. . .]. The fundamental characteristic of popular ballads is therefore the absence of subjectivity and self-consciousness.'

[17] *ESPB* 2:19.

[18] Cf. "Essay, Supplementary to the Preface"(1815), W. J. B. Owen and Jane Worthington Smyser, eds., *The Prose Works of William Wordsworth* (Oxford, 1974) 3: 78.

[19] Cf. "Wordsworth's Preface of 1800 and 1802", R. L. Brett and A. R. Jones, eds., *Lyrical Ballads* (the text of the 1798 edition with the additional 1800 poems and the Prefaces; 1963; rev. London: Methuen, 1968) 244-45.

[20] *Lyrical Ballads*, ed. Brett and Jones 256.

[21] Cf. Friedman 295: 'Wordsworth's ballad poetry is eloquent in showing how sharply the ballad (whether traditional or broadside) has to be wrenched from its true nature in order to accommodate a poet whose concern is with "inner significance" not "ourward spectacle". Cf. Takuro Yabushita, "Romantic Poets and Ballads — Keats's 'La Belle Dame sans Merci'"(my translation), *Quarterly Journal of English Literature* (Apollon, 1974) 11:3: 148-67. He pointed out clearly Wordsworth's contradiction between his announcement and his work.

[22] The quotations are from Brett and Jones, eds., *Lyrical Ballads*.

[23] The quotations are from *The Poetical Works of John Keats*, with an Introduction and Textual Notes by H. Buxton Forman (Oxford, 1922).

[24] Cf. Akiko Kamata, *Mythological Impersonation in John Keats* (Otowa-Shobo Tsurumi-Shoten, 2010) 81-126.

[25] Cf. Christoopher Ricks, ed., *The Poems of Tennyson* (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1969) 398.

[26] The quotations are from *The Poetical Works of Alfred Lord Tennyson* (London: Macmillan, 1899).

[27] Cf. Mitsuyoshi Yamanaka, *Traditional Ballads: An Appreciation* (1988: rpt. Kaibun-sha, 1994) 231-40.

[28] The quotations are from *The Collective Works of Dante Gabriel Rossetti*, ed. with Preface and Notes by William M. Rossetti, 2 vols. (London: Ellis and Elvey, 1890).

[29] Incremental repetition means repeated phrases or sentences including small changes in them. It can raise suspense gradually in a narrative. "The Cruel Brother"(Child 11G) develops the story with refrains and incremental repetitions: three lords came to woo one of three ladies:

> The first of them was clad in red:
> Fine flowers i' the valley
> 'O lady fair, will you be my bride?'
> Wi' the red, green and the yellow
>
> The second of them was clad in green:
> Fine flowers i' the valley
> 'O lady fair, will you be my queen?'
> Wi' the red, green and the yellow
>
> The third of them was clad in yellow:
> Fine flowers i' the valley
> 'O lady fair, will you be my marrow?'
> Wi' the red, green and the yellow (5-16)

Tennysonian sentence of 'the wind is blowing in

turret and tree' in "The Sisters" mentioned above is also an incremental repetition.

[30.] The quotations are from Henry Duff Traill, *Recaptured Rhymes* (Edinburgh: William Blackwood and Sons,1882).

[31.] The quotations are from D. G. Rossetti, *Ballads and Sonnets* (London: Ellis and White, 1881).